MARVEL
PG 25

EXILES™

WITH AN IRON FIST
CONCLUSION

He is Black Bolt.

He is the King of the Inhumans.

He will not speak.

THE CITY OF ATTILAN.

It isn't that he lacks the ability. Quite the contrary, he has the ability to produce the most **powerful sound** that any being has ever heard.

His greatest power is also his greatest curse. His voice is **deadly.**

He can topple buildings with an **utterance.**

Explode through the earth's crust with a spoken word.

So... he is silent. Although, he **can** speak **volumes** with his body language-- it's a skill that he spent his entire life cultivating.

And it is something that his wife, **Susan Richards,** takes great pains to understand.

As a wife who shares her life with a husband who is without speech, she must interpret, search, and fight to comprehend his every gesture.

It is difficult... especially of late.

He has kept completely to himself. Even for a man of **no words** *like Black Bolt, it is out of character.*

Why have you been reading all these?

These are ***books...***

...books on races that have been ***slaughtered.***

The American Indians, the African slave trade to the New World, the Mongol Emperor of China, The Teiping Rebellion--

--The French Revolution, The Aztecs, Jews from all eras... modern texts... ancient books...

Why, Black Bolt? What are you trying to find?

I don't think you'll discover a way to defeat Stark in here.

Yes... I know the story of ***Masada...***

Why would...?

No...

No! No! No!

You don't mean to... please... *please!*

There ***must*** be another way! You can't just-- we shouldn't--

Your Majesty... my Queen. Forgive my intrusion.

We have just received a communication from the *Scarlet Witch* and *Doctor Strange*.

Stark has stolen the *Disruptor*. He has the means to bring the *G-Barrier* down.

We assume another attack on Attilan is... is ***certain***.

We can't...

*Susan knows **exactly** what Black Bolt's look means.*

"We will...," he says.

THE WHITE HOUSE WAR ROOM, NEW YORK CITY.

Weapon X is forced to complete one mission in order to repair this timeline and move to the next world: Aid President Tony Stark in defeating the Inhumans.

It is no small undertaking.

T-minus 3 hours, 17 minutes to operation, "Jericho".

..

Mission initiatives: Deactivation of Galactus force field. Field code: *G Barrier*.

..

Infiltration and acquisition of the city of Attilan.

..

Instate level 10 containment of all Inhuman beings.

..

Team 2 initiative: Prepare for transport to internment facility A.

..

All personnel are instructed to utilize critical force only when all alternatives have been exhausted or to maintain initiative.

Okay, Stark, explain to me why you want us to ***lead*** the attack?

Because first, Gambit-- you're good. You're a ruthless bunch of cusses who managed to take out ***Wonder Man***, the strongest biped on this globe.

I couldn't swing that and I hold the car keys to the planet.

Secondly-- Weapon X has the most to lose. You fail and you have to stay on my crummy little planet.

Or ***even worse***, you get zipped back to a ***twisted*** version of your own reality.

For you, I assume that the stakes are much ***higher*** than most of these super-powered mercenaries I've gathered up.

I like having that motivation behind you.

Hey... you kids don't want the job, you can just cop a squat in a Laz-y Boy here in the war room and watch some ***other folks*** juggle your future.

It's up to you.

No.

We'll lead the charge.

Mr. President! We have movement! ***Attilan*** is moving ***due east*** over the Pacific at two hundred knots.

What are you up to, Black Bolt?

If they maintain this course, is there anything ahead of them?

Not much, Sir. No land masses-- but there is a four mile stretch of coral.

Ah... yes, they'll set the city down there. They want to take the fight ***further*** out to sea so the civilians on land aren't in danger. ***Very noble.***

In any event...

HOURS LATER, OVER THE PACIFIC OCEAN...

"...the Inhumans are prepared for **battle.**"

*President Stark is not merely satisfied with **just** being the ruler of Earth, he hopes to conquer **other worlds** someday.*

*Stark needs a **stronger** breed of human to accomplish that.*

*Human beings are a sturdy lot. And the super-humans provide an excellent start. But he feels that the future of his **intergalactic army** lies in the untapped genetic power of the Inhumans...*

...and Stark will pull them apart to find out what he needs.

Look alive! Wait for my command to move in!

Aye-aye, captain.

Black Bolt has a plan.

Every Inhuman on Attilan has been given their instructions... as well as their King's blessing.

His Queen was not so easily swayed.

It took some pressure to convince Susan that this was the only solution.

Even still... she has lied to him.

She has a plan of her own.

A plan her husband and King would not approve of.

But she would not be able to live with herself if she didn't see it all out to the end.

It is a small lie.

But it will be one with great consequences.

President Stark, we have visual confirmation. There is a division of Inhumans **outside** the perimeter of the G-Barrier.

Did anyone see them exit the city?

Affirmative, Sir. They deactivated the G-Barrier for about 15 seconds. More than enough time for all of them to fly out.

It looks like they aren't going down without a fight.

This is the President... **all** divisions prepare to engage.

Await for the final order from **Weapon X leader Gambit.**

Stand ready...

...repeat... stand ready...

Now! Now!

This is Gambit-- all teams are *go!*

The sound of the two forces colliding can be heard fifty miles away.

It is a thunderous sound of **hatred.**

Of desperation.

Of war.

Co ossus! Storm. Where are you? You're my cover!

Stick together!

Don't let the Inhumans separate us.

We've got to get the *Disruptor* to the base of the barrier for it to work.

I'm grappling with one of these scaly *Inhuman scum!*

Blame the Weather Witch! She should be picking these things off from the *air!*

The name is Storm, you iron plated *pack mule!*

I will maintain my *air support,* but be mindful!

I can't *carry* you to the target point! I can only clear a *path,* Colossus

He is **Karnak.** A member of the Inhuman royal family.

If I have to disarm every one of you-- ***one at a time***-- then it will be done!

CHAKAACK!

A most formidable warrior. Not only does he possess speed, agility, strength, and a mastery of hand-to-combat--

--Karnak's greatest asset is his ability to see the tiniest flaw. The **chink in the armor.** An opponent's **Achilles heel.**

CRACK!!!

With that knowledge he can dispatch almost any adversary with a single calculated blow

Ah..

That is, if he **sees** them coming

That is my hand you feel inside your chest, mighty Karnak. While I do not possess your intuitive ability to find weakness--

--I am certain that making my intangible hand solid and severing the ventricles of your heart will "take the fight out of you."

Unable to speak, Karnak just thinks:

"Everything has a soft spot."

And indeed, **everything** does.

They may only be a millimeter thick, and reside in the intangible body of a highly advanced android--

--but they are there

BAKEESH!

THE G-BARRIER WALL...

Gambit. I am at the target point. We are ready to activate the *Disruptor!*

Can we possibly befall this barrier with such a small device?

The device may be small, but it ll hit the barrier somewhere around 500 m es an hour using that *launcher.*

According to Stark, that should be enough!

Qu ck, Colossus! Press it up aga nst the force field and blast it n! We don t have much--

BLAAM!!

You won t do anything but drown in your own blood, *villains!*

You will not harm another Inhuman while *Gorgon* draws breath!

INSIDE THE G-BARRIER...

The time has come

Black Bolt is ready.

They believe in him. All of his subjects... his family .. his people.

From the powerful beings that make up the strength of the city's populace--

--to the Alpha Primitives who dwell deep beneath the city--

--to those who live in between

They all agree Fate has dealt them a terrible blow.

They shall now turn to meet it...

THE G-BARRIER WALL...

Let's pray the Disruptor works, Vision!

BOOOM!

We have no time for prayer, Colossus

Sorry it had to go down this way Gorgon..

...but I want to go **home.**

Black Bolt has been reading about Earth's history of **genocide.**

How, over and over again, so many have attempted to destroy **entire races** *of people.*

Stark to Gambit! We read the activation of **the Disruptor.** *Can you confirm?*

Read you loud and clear, Stark

Unfortunately, there was a great deal of material to choose from.

But there was **one tale** *that struck a chord with Black Bolt.*

I hope I have not failed you sire...

Centuries ago, after the **fall of Jerusalem** *and the* **destruction of the Jewish Temple** *in 70 CE by the conquering Roman army...*

1,000 Jewish Zealot resisters and their families **fled** *Jerusalem and took over a remote mountaintop.*

The shield is down!

Phase two, people! ***Neutralize*** every Inhuman in the city. Man, woman and child!

The resisters withstood a **2-year siege** *by the Roman Tenth Legion.*

Then, in 73 CE, the Roman Governor **Flavius Silva** *marched against them.*

The Roman Army established camps at the base of the fortress and laid siege to it.

This is Gambit to Stark-- we are within the walls Await further..

This is Stark Repeat, Gambit. Your last transmission was incomplete.

God.

Later they constructed a rampart made up of thousands of tons of stones and beaten earth.

Gambit' Come in. What's your status?

It's all very very bad...

In the spring of the year 74 CE, the attacking army moved a battering ram up this ramp and finally breached the wall of the Jewish resisters' fortress.

The end was inevitable for the resisters

This was not a battle they could win.

Gambit , come in what.. what's going on out there?

So, the 1,000 robbed the Roman Army of their victory They would not live to be enslaved and tortured.

Their children and their children's children would not lead the desperate life of bondage to the Romans.

They chose death at their own hands.

They're dead. They're all dead.

God almighty... all of them.

Run! All of you! Go! Get out of the city!

Don't look back. It's a trap! You hear me?! It's a trap!

How could they all-- *why* would they--?

Don't quest on, you *idiot!* Flee!

The answer should be--

--obvious?!

Are we--?

Teleporting! Yes! We've completed our mission!

But we *didn't*, did we? We haven't defeated the Inhumans.

No. I guess we didn't. We must have just set *something else* in motion.

Good luck, folks. You're on your own.

When the leader of the Roman Army finally **entered** *the resisters' stone fortress he had laid siege to for so long, he gazed upon the dead and uttered--*

"We have won. We have won a rock."

Black Bolt wondered what Stark would say.

He hoped that Stark would remember the story of the Romans and the Jews.

He hoped that the legend of that rock wouldn't be forgotten.

He hoped that its name would ring in the ears of his oppressors

Even if they were half a world away

--they would hear its name.

MASADA!!

THE PRESIDENTIAL GARDENS...

Weapon X's role in this reality is now clear. They were merely pawns in time's massive reconstruction. They were meant to help Stark. Help him fail.

Stark has lost. Completely and utterly. He cares little for his army that has perished.

It was the Inhumans that he wanted...

There were no bodies to recover. All were vaporized. Stark wouldn't even be able to study the genetic matter of the dead.

He believes that the Inhumans and everything they could have provided for him are gone.

He is wrong. They are not all gone. Some are merely hiding.

BEEP

They will begin again in secret-- the world will be oblivious to their existence.

Black Bolt's plan has worked perfectly.

Weak... pathetic... failure...

M-AACK!!

And time is rectifying itself.

Black Bolt had not only sent an ark of hope to rebuild his race. He sent along one human leader.

He beat you, you bastard.

I wanted you to know that.

aaaaaack...

During the battle-- he had me cloak ***three hundred*** of us.

Just three hundred... and he left me to lead them.

But I had to come back!

I couldn't let you live.

This was Susan Richards' lie to Black Bolt. She would leave the remaining Inhumans to exact her revenge.

And this is how time healed itself in this realm.

SECURITY BREACH! The President is down!

This world will never know the debt it owes to a group of nomadic super beings. A reality away, Weapon X will never understand their true purpose on this planet.

They set events in motion that brought about this moment.

In the decades to come, the horrors that Tony Stark had perpetrated would come to light.

TZOT!

TZOT!

I'll be with you soon, my loves...

And it will be recognized by the world that it took the sacrifice of an entire civilization, and one woman who loved their king...

...to free this world from the hands of a monster.

END